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special flip double cover

ETERNAL RYTE

LEVITICUS

A METAL BIBLE MIRACLE

TORMAN MAXT

ONCE DEAD

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Oct/Nov 2007 Issue #71 $2.95

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THE ULTIMATE MORTIFICATION LIVE EXPERIENCE IS COMING VERY SOON. RECORDED LIVE IN 2006 WITH 7 DIGITAL CAMERAS AND PRO EDITING IN DOLBY 5.1 SURROUND SOUND. FINALLY A VISUAL RELEASE FROM MORTIFICATION THAT EQUALS LIVE PLAENTARIUM.

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November 9th- Oslo Norway (Nordic Fest).
November 10th- Stuttgart Germany.

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TRUE AUSTRALIAN JESUS REVOLUTION METAL!

Issue #71
October/November 2007

HEAVEN'S METAL®

Here we go ... flipping out again!
This has been an interesting and frustrating issue to put together. The fun and great part is to see all the great albums we're reviewing. Oh my gosh, there's some great metal here. The frustrating thing is to see Larry Farkas leave Once Dead and this particular album get delayed again and again. Even as we go to press (and hope that the album comes out in October), we don't know if the thing will actually come out. Anyway, enough venting. We kinda dig doing this double flip cover when we have two great stories that warrant it.

And a word from my heart: our advertisers basically pay the print bills around here; so please patronize their businesses. If you can't buy anything from them this month, at least consider writing them an encouraging note or email.

If you have a chance to make Cornerstone California, please take it. The lineup on the Sanctuary Stage sounds epic.

Grace and Peace,

ELEMENTS

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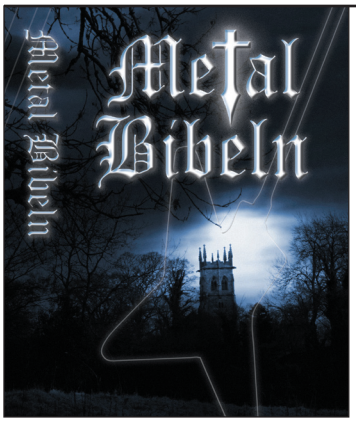
METAL TRACKS

Hard-news-for-metal-heads



A METAL BIBLE MIRACLE...

REPORTED BY JOHANNES JOHSSON

Hey folks! First of all, I would really like to thank you so much for all your prayer support! We could really feel that your prayers backed us up throughout the whole outreach. Most of the people said that the Metal Bible was a great idea and really wanted to have a copy. When we gathered in the beginning of the week to prepare the outreach, we realized that we had too few Metal Bibles available for Sweden Rock and the other festivals this summer. Then, we prayed that God somehow would multiply the Metal Bibles just like He multiplied the 5 loaves and 2 fishes to the 5,000. Later that day we called and checked how many Metal Bibles were at the storing place. And when the girl who was in charge of the storing place checked, she found 550 extra Metal Bibles that hadn't been there before!! So God had made a miracle and somehow placed 550 extra Metal Bibles there without anyone knowing where they came from! Wow! God is so awesome!!!

This time we were about 35-40 people involved in the outreach and we were standing at four different places. We had put up signs that said, "Feel free to take a Metal Bible," and many came and picked up a copy. The most common responses we got: "Cool, this one I really have to get," "Great idea with a metal Bible," "Can I take a copy for my friend?" and "I will read this in my tent tonight." Some people even took us in hand and thanked us for the Metal Bible and most of the people were very positive about it.

The coolest thing during the outreach was that two people were saved! Amen. We got to pray for several persons and also gave away water for free, which was very appreciated in the heat. So we were there, available for the people, showing them God's love, ministering to all that wanted our help. We also celebrated the Lord's Supper right in the festival area just outside my booth, proclaiming Jesus' victory over Satan. After the Lord's Supper, we also prayed that God would open doors so many bold Christian Metal bands would play on Sweden Rock in the years to come and that Christian Metal would have a much bigger impact in the Swedish Metal world. It was very powerful and God definitely did some great things there.

When the satanic black metal band Marduk was about to play, we prayed in the name of Jesus that God would cause confusion in the band and that the band would not succeed in bringing satanic influence over the audience. During their gig they had planned to drink blood and then throw it on the audience. But when the vocalist was about to do this ritual, he felt very confused and just couldn't do it! The guitar player then got very angry on the singer because he didn't drink the blood and they almost started to fight behind the scene. So God heard our prayers and truly showed that He is the one that rules.

The outreach was very successful and during the festival 6,100 Metal Bibles went away! Since 29,000 metalheads were gathered, about 1/5 of them got one. Amen. Almost none of them were thrown away and we only found 2-3 that were destroyed, so that means people liked them and wanted to keep them. 50 Metal Bibles was also spread backstage and artists and staff eagerly picked them up.

Please keep all the people that received the Bibles in prayer, that God will urge them to read it and that God will speak prophetically into their lives through the Bibles and that they will find Christ through them. I really want to thank God for all He did during this outreach! God is so awesome and He is really the one that has made this outreach so successful. I'm glad to have the privilege to be His servant. To God be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

www.metalbibel.nu/enginfo.htm

News bullets

Keep an eye on TBN, as their show hosted by Dino is the #2 rated and watched show in TBN history, and Dino recently discovered the ministry and mission of **Bloodgood**. Dino dedicated an entire thirty minute show to the band, and there may be an opportunity for the band to reappear in the future on a more regular basis.

Soul Embraced is re-united and playing shows again. They can be reached at myspace.com/soulembraced.

Brad Delp, the voice of Boston since 1969, died in his home March 9th 2007. On Aug. 18th 2007 an event to celebrate the life of Brad was held in Boston, MA, with the band Boston being joined by many guest vocalists. One of those guest vocalists was none other than **Michael Sweet** of Stryper, who was honored and humbled to share the stage with the band in this amazing tribute. Tom Sholtz later raved about Sweet and his performance on his website.

The seventh studio album by **Liberty N' Justice** will be released to retail stores on Oct. 17th, and is their first full production acoustic rock record. It features such powerhouse talent as John Corabi (Motley Crue/Ratt/Union), Jack Russell (Great White), Kelly Keagey (Night Ranger), Mark Slaughter (Slaughter), Pete Loran (Trixter), Tony Mills (TNT), **Jamie Rowe** (Guardian), Jaime St. James (Warrant/Black n' Blue), **Ez Gomer** (Jet Circus), **David Raymond Reeves** (Neon Cross), and many others.

Deliverance is scheduled to play a benefit show in San Juan, Puerto Rico, at the same venue where the recently released Stryper live DVD was recorded.

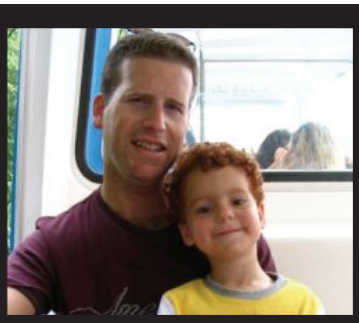
Open Grave Records recording artist **Feast Eternal** have completed their new record *With Fire*, which is a long awaited follow up to their 2000 *Prisons of Flesh*, which was recently reissued on Open Grave also.

Shining Force is almost finished with the 4-song demo for record company's to review. They have had several record labels interested in the soon to be released CD *By the Blood,* which should be released later this year; watch for it at shiningforceband.com. The band has also been invited to be one of the headlining bands at this year's Godstock festival.

Hemotheory is putting the finishing touches on the packaging for their new CD entitled *Zeta*. *Zeta* is a Greek form of seven. The story behind the name? It took seven people, seven days to record the seven songs on the new CD. Hear samples and watch for the release at hemotheory.com.

Pioneering Christian rock band **Degarmo & Key** are having a reunion concert in Memphis, TN. on September 30, 2007, at **Dana Key**'s church (where he is senior pastor) as part of a celebration/dedication of the new building purchased by the church. This is the first D&K public concert in 13 years! Original band members **Tommy Cathey** on bass and **Greg Morrow** on drums will also be performing. This concert is free to the public.

Meet the Press



JONATHAN SWANK

AKA "Doctor Addicted to Metal"
Age: 39

Favorite Metal Album 2006:
Iron Maiden – *A Matter of Life and Death* (because life is…)

The choicest metal/rock in my world (in chronological order from 1985 to present—the Heaven's Metal era):

Stryper – *Soldiers Under Command*
Metallica – *Master of Puppets*
Sacred Warrior - *Wicked Generation*
Bride – *Snakes in the Playground*
Dream Theater – *Images and Words*
Galactic Cowboys – *Space in Your Face*
Living Sacrifice – *Reborn*
Shadow Gallery - *Tyranny*
Extol – Undeceived
Scorpions – *Unbreakable*

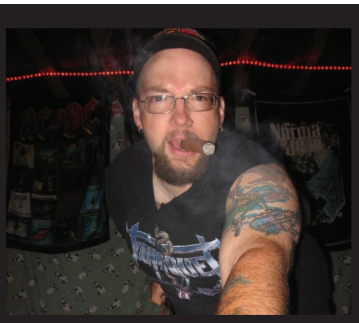
Favorite Movies: *Matrix*, *T2*, *Saving Private Ryan*, *Lord of the Rings* trilogy

Favorite TV Shows: *The X-Files*, *24* and *Heroes*

Favorite Video Game: *Guitar Hero I*, *II* and *Encore – Rock the 80's* on PS2 (the best video game ever for rockers/metalheads … perhaps the best video game ever, period)

Interesting Fact: While on tour of duty in Bosnia—as a medical officer in the Army—I saved a civilian's life.

Famous last words: "It fits my hunger to the perfect."



CHRIS GATTO

Age: 32

Favorite metal albums of 2006: Tortured Conscience – *Every Knee Shall Bow*, Leatherwolf – *World Asylum*

Best contenders for 2007: Becoming the Archetype – *Physics of Fire*, 3 Inches of Blood – *Fire Up the Blades*

Favorite metal bands/albums of all time: Tourniquet – *Psycho Surgery*; AC/DC; Iron Maiden – *Powerslave*; Accept; Saint – *Time's End*; Judas Priest – *Painkiller*; Deep Purple – *Perfect Strangers*; Testament – *Practice What You Preach*; Megadeth – *Peace Sells…*; Bride – *Silence is Madness*; Vengeance Rising – *Once Dead*; Overkill; Whitecross – *Whitecross*; Motorhead; Deliverance – *Deliverance*; Saxon – *Lionheart*; Undercover – *Balance of Power*; Rob Rock; Impellitteri; Loudness – *Rock Shocks*; Hammerfall; Dio – *Killing the Dragon*

Favorite movie/TV: *The Simpsons Movie*, *CSI Miami*

Pet's name: No pets, but we have 2 daughters who destroy the house like any good pet would do.

Interesting facts about me: Bible college grad; pro-life ministry with Rock for Life and Stand True; missionary call to Russia; did I say how much I love METAL?; Lions club president; work in the aerospace metal industry (Keeping it METAL!!!)

Something goofy about me: Absolutely love hand-rolled Dominican cigars.

To see an extended version of these, visit hmmag.com/heavensmetal

Narnia will release a special double CD, titled *Decade of Confession*, on digipak 8/24 on Nuclear Blast. The compilation features classics from all studio albums. It also has some live tracks as well as some tunes that previously have been released in Japan only. The double CD also includes a brand new track called "In His Majesty's Service," a previously unreleased remix of "Show All The World," as well as the Uriah Heep cover "Sunrise." Narnia will also tour to push this release and the tour starts in Holland, August 16 at the Flevo Festival. It will be the biggest live production so far for Narnia and will include a co-operation with magician Jimmy Carlsson, who is well known in Sweden and has worked in Las Vegas as well. Jimmy is a die-hard Narnia fan and he is Christian as well. They are now in the preparations for this production and special music has been composed especially for the live show. [narniaworld.com]

The new **Veni Domine** CD, *Tongues* will be released 9/14. [venidomine.com]

Pantokrator has now released their brand new album *Aurum*. The CD is filled with crunchy death metal with a cool mix of melody and brutality with plenty of great guitar riffs. This is their debut album on Germany's Whirlwind Records. Sound clips are available at myspace.com/pantokratorofficial.

Hero recently got three new members in **Marcus Lanfjall** – guitar, **Mikael Eklund** – guitar and **Johan Adler** – keyboards. This means that the band now has 3 guitar players. From now on, they will also incorporate lots of choirs in their sound. [myspace.com/herosweden]

Divinefire will record their final studio album titled, *Farewell*, to say thank you for the fantastic support through the years Divinefire has existed. Two very special guests are already confirmed for the last studio album: **Carl Johan Grimmark** (Narnia and Rob Rock) on lead guitars and Christian Rivel's younger brother **Hubertus Liljegren** (ex. Crimson Moonlight and Sanctifica) on growling vocals. [divinefire.net]

Divinefire have begun work on the fourth, and last, album, which will be adequately entitled *Farewell*.

The long awaited reissue of 80's Christian Metal Glamsters **Eternal Ryte** will be released Sept. 25th. For more details and track listing, visit roxxproductions.com.

The official Sanctuary Stage Schedule at Cornerstone Fest California (cornerstonecalifornia.com) for Sept 28-29, Fri and Sat is: Friday: **Under Command**, **Torman Maxt**, **Jupiter 6**, **Michael Drive** (formerly Mike Lee of Barren Cross), Sanctuary Worship (with Pastor Bob and Jim LaVerde*), **Blissed**, **Souljourners**, **Ultimatum**, **Tourniquet**; Sat: **Terrestial Harvest**, **Richard Andrews Experiment**, Torman Maxt, **Strangeland**, **Glenn Kaiser Band**, **Emerald**, **Recon**, Sanctuary Worship*, **Neon Cross**, **Once Dead**, **Barren Cross** and **Bloodgood**.

Grindcore fans take note: August saw the release of *Sin Decomposition*, a 6-way split release that is "a holy alliance of Christian grind and noise from The United States, Ecuador, Germany and Australia." It features 83 tracks from 6 different artists, with over an hour of audio! Bands include **Flactorophia** (Ecuador), **Demonic Dismemberment** (USA), **Eternal Mystery** (USA), **Vomitous Discharge** (Germany), **Engravor** (Australia) and long-time grind favorites, **Vomitorial Corpulence** (Australia).

METAL TRACKS

Page 6

MIXING OLD SCHOOL & NEW

Just a quick note to tell you how much I enjoyed the Sep./Oct. issue of Heaven's Metal. I loved the Bloodgood interview. Can't wait to hear some new material from these guys. Hopefully, we'll see a Stryper/Bloodgood tour real soon. I also really enjoyed the 7Days interview. Enjoyed catching up with Guy Ritter. The new Deliverance album is excellent, I enjoyed catching up with them as well. I love the mix of old school/new school bands. I also like the double cover. This should become a regular thing. One cover with a classic metal band and one with a newer metal band. I have one request. I would love to see Theocracy featured in an upcoming issue. These guys are great! They'll have a new album out soon. I predict that Theocracy will be signed to a big label real soon. They're a super talented band. Anyway, just something to consider. Keep up the great work with the mag. In Christ,
–Brian Slay, via internet

Ed – Did you see our Theocracy cover story last year? Issue #66 available as a back issue. See our entire catalog of back issues at hmmag.com's store.

SYMBOLS OF EVIL?

I had received a past issue of Heavens Metal of the Aug/Sep 2007 and I note your observation that the Christian metal scene is growing and is very healthy at the moment. What is disturbing me at the moment are the odd releases that denote satanic symbols or artwork (i.e. Necromicider from Brazil and now Pantokrator's latest release, with its horoscope symbols on the outside ring of the cd, behind a picture of Christ and inside the insert is a clear pentagram with the artistic face of satan and other symbologies). I understand that band members themselves may have a clear understanding of what messages they are conveying; but when seeing something like this for the first time, it gives a first impression of: 'What is this and what is going on?' In the 80s nothing like this was considered and I guess times have changed, but should the standard change? Do you think such a concern should exist? Just wondering,
–Trevor Ray, via internet

Ed – I say, "Questioning is good. Checking these things out, I'm confident, will reveal that symbols are not to be feared, but understood.

WHICH IS BETTER FOR ME?

I have a question: I'm interested in your mag. What is the difference with HM and the other mag, Heaven's Metal mag? I listen to more old stuff then new stuff. I'm 31. Which one would you suggest be best for me to get a subscription too?
–Brian Ghelarducci, via internet

Ed – That's easy – this one!

WHEN WILL IT GO ONLINE?

The new issue (Aug/Sep) of Heaven's Metal is great. Will the interviews be put online soon?
–Bob Wysocki, via internet

Ed – My bad. I procrastinated getting them up. They're there now.

HEAVEN'S METAL COLLECTION

Hope you're recovered from Cornerstone by now. By ANY chance do you have any copies remaining of the *Heaven's Metal Collection* boxset from '91/'92 in a vault somewhere? Even cassette copies of this project would be great – or, are you planning on re-releasing/re-issuing it on CD any time in the future? Thanks for being the editor of the best Christian mag/ministry ever!
–Drew McNeill, via internet

Ed – I wish I could've gotten my hands on hundreds of these when they were going out of print. I've only got my 2 personal copies left. I believe Rad Rockers, who diligently gets these items before they get destroyed or sent to junk dealers for flea markets. He does this because he cares about Christian rock and metal, by the way. He's a Christian rock hero in my book. Try him.

PEN PALS, MAN!

Can you start a pen pal section in the all heavy metal bands mag? My three favorite bands are: Steven Patrick; Pyramaze; and Warmachine. Age: 45. My address is 12201 Lamas Blvd NE #112, Albuquerque NM 87112-5865. Agape Grace!
–Grace Lewis, Albuquerque, NM

Ed – You got it! Here is the first installment of a pen-pal section, which we'll format in this section; right here as a "letter."

[nothin' but] **News bullets**

Bride's **Dale Thompson** has decided to start a new band. "**Scottie Hoaglan** the guitarist in **Nailed** and I are writing together on a project named *Monster of the Americas*. Details can be found at myspace.com/philipdalethompson

Bride's latest CD (*Skin For Skin*) has been re-released. A future Bride CD is on hold pending **Troy Thompson**'s possible work relocation to Italy.

The power metal band **Cage** has asked to play the Sanctuary Stage at next year's Cornerstone. This heavy band is worth checking out. [cageheavymetal.com]

As I Lay Dying's new album, *An Ocean Between Us*, has been released to rave reviews (and a cover spot on the Sep/Oct issue of HM Magazine). The reviewer in HM gave it a "classic" 5 out of 5 rating, calling it: "certainly the best metal album this year, and I would even venture to say the last five years..."

Scott Stapp is currently in the studio, writing with a new band, and describes the new music as "The perfect expression of the last 4 years with a heavier edge, deeper grooves, and chill songs that even give US the chills..."

Cliffy (fka Cliffy Huntington), a longtime metal fan, has formed a new band called **Main Line Riders**, and signed a deal with Retroactive Records ... with plans for an album by October. You'll probably be pleasantly surprised by their sound. [myspace.com/mainlineriders]

Killswitch Engage, whose members include longtime Christian metal fan (and Cornerstone Festival attendee) Howard Jones have covered the Dio song "Holy Diver," accompanied by a tongue-in-cheek theatrical video of the same. [myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=vids.individual&VideoID=14620102] The special edition of the band's re-release of As Daylight Dies, includes the song and video.

"In the spirit of early 1900 church hymms of which many were borrowed melodies from popular bar tunes of the day," **X-Sinner** has added lyrically reworked versions of two AC/DC songs to their live set list. "Shot Of Love" from the *Razors Edge* album and "Hell Aint A Bad Place To Be" (changed to "Hell IS a Bad Place To Be") from the *Let There Be Rock* album. "The decision to do this was actually driven by fan requests and suggestions from people who always wanted to hear X-Sinner cover an AC/DC tune and for the pure fun of doing it as well." The song "Hell..." is introduced by Rex shouting to the audience: "don't let anybody fool you!! Hell IS a bad place to be!" The band continues work on its new album, *Back In Red*.

Be sure to check out the metal articles in the upcoming Nov/Dec issue of HM Magazine (with **Demon Hunter** on the cover and in the poster): **Pantokrator**, **Immortal Souls**, and an up-close and personal article on **The Showdown**'s summer experience touring Ozzfest.

RETROACTIVE RECORDS

TITANIC – FULL STEAM AHEAD
Two bonus tracks feature STRYPER's Robert Sweet on drums! For fans of Judas Priest and Iron Maiden. angelicwarlord.com says, "This one proves quite the powerful piece – both musically and lyrically – with an avalanche of mega-tight riffs sustaining it from front to back."

DELIVERANCE - GREETINGS OF DEATH, ETC.
DELIVERANCE -THE FIRST FOUR YEARS
Both are Limited Edition reissues of early thrash demos from one of Christian metal's most prolific metal bands. Remastered, enhanced and new artwork!!!

DELIVERANCE - ASSIMILATION (Special Edition) This remastered reissue contains a bonus CD of the 14 previously unreleased demos from the Assimilation recordings, making this a 2 CD set! This is brilliant, progressive metal made readily available once again!

DELIVERANCE - AS ABOVE~SO BELOW
Few groups have ever blended epic thrash / speed metal with the elegance and beauty of progressive metal (later period Deliverance) with such devastating skill and brutality. Alternating so many moments of beauty with beastly moments of metallic fury and spine snapping riffs that would seem right at home on a Slayer, Believer, or early Deliverance album.

ZION – THRILLSEEKER
"Gritty, scratchy and hard rocking while delivering an abundance of energy at the same time..." —angelicwarlord.com. Demos and rarities collection delivers the goods! Features X-Sinner vocalist, Rex Scott!!!

SARDONYX - MAJESTIC SERENITY / REBEL OF REASON
Remastered and reissued heavy, this previously rare & crunchy thrash metal release now includes the band's original demo! For fans of Testament & early Megadeth!

ULTIMATUM - SYMPHONIC EXTREMITIES
Remastered classic with bonus tracks!

ULTIMATUM - THE MECHANICS OF PERILOUS TIMES
Remastered classic with bonus tracks!

SEVENTH SEAL - MESSENGERS OF LOVE
Remastered reissue of ultra rare 1990 classic metal from Norway! Powerful vocals and high octane dual guitars bring to mind TNT & Yngwie Malmsteen!

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LEVITICUS
Where are they now?

INTERVIEW BY STEVE ROWE

LISTEN IN AS STEVE ROWE AND BJORN STIGSSON REMINISCE ABOUT THE GLORY DAYS OF CHRISTIAN METAL, STEVE'S ROMANTIC "FLAMES OF FIRE" AND BJORN'S PASSION TO "SET THE WORLD ON FIRE."

Bjorn Stigsson, welcome to Heaven's Metal Magazine once again. It is great to be speaking with one of the pioneers of Jesus Metal. Can you tell us how you felt when your first album *I Shall Conquer* was released in 1985?
Bjorn: In that time it was great blessings for us to release the album *I Shall Conquer* outside of Sweden. We really wanted to reach people all over the world. The album was released in Sweden in 1983 with lyrics in Swedish and was called *Jag Skall Segra*.

Can you tell us your thoughts about your time with Refuge/ Pure Metal Records?
They did a great job, but in that time they had some financial problems so we lost some money.

What do you think is the highlight track from the first two albums and why?
On the album *I Shall Conquer*, it is "All is Calm." It`s a strong message even today – 'be ready because the Lord will come like a thief in the night.' On the album *The Strongest Power*, it is maybe "Deborah and Barak." 'Trust in the Lord. He will help you even when the enemy seems to be stronger.'

"Sweden is a Christian country with lots of churches. You can find them even in the smallest villages. Maybe the believers are few but lots of them are standing on solid ground."

Was there a reason for Hakan Andersson's departure from the band? He is the cousin of Kjell Andersson (drummer) correct?
Hakan and Kjell are cousins. Hakan felt that he wanted to leave the stage and work instead as a sound-engineer for Leviticus. In that time, it was strange for us because he had the blessings and charisma of an evangelist. He was also a very good musician.

I have both album covers from the first two releases. Which is your favorite from each one? I prefer Talking Music's *I Shall Conquer* and Twilight Records' *The Strongest Power* versions.
The best cover is *I Shall Conquer* from Twilight Records. It`s a soldier of God from Ephesians 6:10-18.

I have fond memories of touring with you in 1989 when I had my 80's band Lightforce. 1000 people at the Sydney show was a huge success. What are your memories of playing in Australia?
We really loved Australia and all the nice people we met there. They did take very good care of us and took us to some beautiful places and adventures. The gig in Sydney was a great one too. That will always be in my memories.

I started dating my wife in September 1987. We listened to *Setting Fire to the Earth* ALL the time. The first time we kissed, "Flames of Fire" was playing! Does this make you feel special as we are now married 17 years?
Oh, it is great to hear that and it really blessed me very much.

Can you tell us how Peo came to be in the band? Was Peo a Christian when he first joined Leviticus?
Peo was one of our very good friends and he also helped us produce the Leviticus records. He is a great singer and musician. He was a Christian, but he became closer to God when he was in the band.

Did you get tired of lineup changes? Is this the reason you chose the name XT for the two early 90's releases?
It`s not good to change the lineup, but the last one with Peo was great. I felt in 1990 that the Lord wanted us to take a break, so I went to a Bible school in Sweden. I really wanted to have more from the Lord, so I took my family, my wife and my three children and we went to another town in Sweden where the Bible school was located. My wife and I studied the Bible and our children went to a Christian school. When we came back two years later, Sonny Larsson and I started XT. We wanted to do something new with the music, so we started to mix live with programming music. At that time, I built up my own studio. We used couple of samplers, synthesizers and of course, guitars, basses and drums. XT released three albums and the last one was the heaviest. We sold lots of records in Japan in the secular market and they also did their own covers.

Why do all the best Jesus Rock/ Metal come from Sweden? There was Jerusalem, then you guys, then more recently Narnia. Sweden is known as a very non-Christian country. Why do you think that the standout bands over the years from Sweden have been so Christ centered?
It's hard to answer this question, but in the 80`s there were many good hard rock musicians in Sweden. Many of them came from the church. Maybe this is one of the reasons why there were so many Swedish Christian bands. Sweden is a Christian country with lots of churches. You can find them even in the smallest villages. Maybe the believers are few but lots of them are standing on solid ground.

I am assuming there were only four Leviticus albums, plus your *Together with Friends* release. Are there any plans to re-issue all five on CD? Maybe a Box Set? I would buy two – one for me and one for my wife.
I planned to release a box set in 2003, but the owner of *Setting Fire to the Earth*, *Knights of Heaven* and *Together with Friends* wanted to have so much money for the rights and he wouldn't release them. But it`s still a good idea.

In 2003 you did a reunion show and live album at Bobfest. There were strong rumors that this was coming on DVD. Was the show ever planned for DVD release also?
Live at Bobfest 2003 has been released as a DVD. It´s hard to find them in the market. We had sold them at our web site.

What are the chances of a new Leviticus or XT studio album?
To make a new Leviticus or an XT record it is very important for me to hear from God that He wants us to do that. If He wants, I will give100% to do it.

Is it true that the main work you do is producing dance music? If not, what is your main career these days?
Yes, I worked as a producer for dance and pop music between 1995 and 2005. I had some 'number ones' in the Swedish charts, but I was so tired after 10 years of working eight days a week and 15-16 hours every day that I decided to take a break for a while.

What do you think about today's Christian Rock/ Metal bands? How do you feel about Christians in bands not singing about Jesus and salvation?
It`s strange for me. If the pastor or the evangelist doesn't preach the message of God, the people will be lost. So the question is, do we want to play music for fun (nothing wrong with that) or do we want to be used of God to reach people with the Gospel. If we don't tell them the message from God, who will then be saved?

Do you have any words of wisdom for the readers of Heaven's Metal magazine, besides kissing to "Flames of Fire" and playing pink guitars?
The message from "All is Calm" is very current today – when everyone says that 'all is calm' then 'the Lord will come as a thief in the night.' Be ready. c
Bjorn Stigsson, we salute you for your pioneering work in true Jesus Metal! Any last comments to inspire us?
Thank you very much and God bless you all. Be 'flames of fire' for the Lord in 2007.

Thank you Bjorn, again. We all love you! Bring the Jesus Rock!
Thank you, again. I love you all.

HEAVEN'S METAL

ONCE DEAD
Visions of the past and present

BY CHRIS BECK

WHEN SOME FORMER MEMBERS OF VENGEANCE RISING GOT TOGETHER TO FORM ONCE DEAD, THERE WAS MUCH REJOICING, AS VENGEANCE RISING IS CONSIDERED ONE OF THE ORIGINAL TITANS OF CHRISTIAN HEAVY METAL. THOUGH IT MAY SEEM LIKE IT'S TAKING THEM A LONG TIME TO RECORD THE NEW ALBUM, VISIONS OF HELL, FANS AREN'T THE ONLY ONES GROWING IMPATIENT WITH THE PROCESS. WE RECENTLY DISCUSSED THE MANY CHALLENGES OF RE-FORMING THE BAND AND RECORDING THE NEW ALBUM WITH GUITARIST DOUG THIEME AND VOCALIST DEVIN SHAEFFER.

CB: There have been some recent changes within Once Dead. Please tell us a little about the new members.
Doug: Once Dead was started simply for the purpose of performing a Vengeance Rising reunion show with the original members of Vengeance Rising. Based on the fact that Roger Martinez was not an option for a vocalist, our promoter, Bill Bafford, arranged to have Scott Waters perform with us – with "us" being Doug Thieme, Larry Farkas, Roger Martin, and Glenn Mancaruso. After the original show, we were asked to do several more shows and then an album. Roger Martin elected to leave us shortly after the second show, due to travel issues, since he is now living in Nashville. Roger Martin was replaced by long-time friend Angelo Espino. Angelo was in several bands (Reverend, Uncle Slam and Hirax) and has been a perfect fit for us. For similar reasons, Glenn Mancaruso was replaced with long-time friend Jim Chaffin (Crucified, Blamed and Fasedown). Jim had been a dear friend of ours for many years and is an incredible drummer. Around the same time, Glenn Rogers (Hirax, Steel Vengeance, Deliverance and original Vengeance lead guitarist) was added to the band as well. After performing a few more shows with the new line-up, we began to work on Visions of Hell. We were then faced with the issue of Scott living 1,500 miles away in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and also fronting Ultimatum. After many frustrating and rigorous band meetings, it was decided that we should let Scott go and add former Fasedown frontman, Devin Shaeffer. Adding to the changes in the line-up, Larry Farkas has now left the band. Larry wanted to release *Visions of Hell* through his longtime friend, Bryan Jay, after the entire band had already agreed in principal to sign with Open Grave Records. After much debate, Larry elected to leave the group and take the portion of the album he had written with him. So now the final official line-up is Doug Thieme, Glenn Rogers, Angelo Espino, Jim Chaffin, and Devin Shaeffer.

How has the recording and production of *Visions of Hell* been proceeding?
Doug: The writing and recording of this album has been a roller coaster ride. We attempted to write and record this album with the benefits of new technologies. It turned out to be a very dry and unemotional process. Everyone was laying down their tracks independent of everyone else and it lost all feeling. After the departure of Larry, we elected to take the album back to formula and record it like a band is supposed to—all together, raw and brutal. We have become re-energized and are incredibly pleased with the new direction.

Devin: I accepted the invitation to join the band on September 26, 2006. At that point, much of the music writing was already in place, but we really needed to put everything together to make sure that it made sense from a full composition standpoint. We really felt that we could accomplish our original self-imposed deadlines, but we had many unforeseen challenges along the way, not permitting us to finish when we had set out to. Ultimately, nothing is insurmountable, and we are determined to get something out that people will be pleased with.

What should fans expect to hear with the new album? Will it be similar to Vengeance Rising or Die Happy, or something completely different?
Doug: It will definitely have a Vengeance (*Human Sacrifice*-era) feel to it. Glenn and I wrote the majority of *Human Sacrifice* together and there should be some definite similarities.

Devin: It will be a blend of different sounds and influences. Vocally, I moved away from the last Fasedown album, *Blitz of Anguish*, and more towards the traditional thrash sound and feel. It was really a fun transition, as I was raised on the old school thrash and death metal music styles.

Were most of the songs on *Visions of Hell* written recently, or are there some songs that were written before for other bands, but never used?
Doug: There is one song, "The Contract," which I had written back in the Vengeance days, which we actually performed on the *Once Dead* tour. The title track, "Visions of Hell," was written by Glenn back in the Vengeance days and was called "Body Parts," and was supposed to have been on Deliverance's album *Weapons of our Warfare*. The rest is new material written for this album.

Why did you and the others decide to re-form the band after so many years?
Doug: I was personally against re-forming the group in the beginning and did it purely for selfish reasons—to play with my old friends and have some fun. But after meeting with so many of our fans I actually was inspired and felt that we could still make an impact in some way, and I truly believe we are.

After all these years, how do you view your time spent with Vengeance Rising and what the band accomplished?
Doug: If you asked me this question prior to the reunion, I would have said little or nothing. I was very down on the entire Christian metal movement for many years. It seemed like it was more of a self-indulgent bunch of groups playing music in the name of the Lord. After performing a few reunion shows, I was approached by grown men and women who had become leaders of youth groups and helped thousands of kids through their ministries all over the world. They thanked Vengeance for helping them through tough times in their lives. I had no idea how much good really came out of it. It is only because of these people who I have helped that I carry on. I truly thank God for them, because they have given me closure and purpose for all of my efforts.

Devin: My first meeting with the band was pretty weird with Doug, Larry, Jim, Angelo and me meeting and discussing the future of Once Dead. I've never been a "star struck" type of person, but still I had to grin to myself, as I never would have thought way back in high school that these guys, who I grew up listening to, would be asking me to join their band. It was quite surreal. The writing process has been great, working with musicians who have a very professional mindset as to the "business" of music.

When was the last time you personally spoke with Roger Martinez?
Doug: I haven't spoken with him in over 15 years. Keep up the prayers for him. He really did a lot of great things when he was following the Lord.

TORMAN MAXT
Just talking about pain...so far

INTERVIEW BY DOUG VAN PELT

IN THE WORLD OF CHRISTIAN HEAVY METAL, IT TAKES A LOT OF FORTITUDE TO KEEP GOING. IN THE USA, AUDIENCES HAVE DECLINED EVER SINCE BEAVIS AND BUTTHEAD KEPT GIVING A WEDGIE TO THAT WINGER-SHIRT-WEARIN' CHARACTER NAMED STUART. BANDS LIKE DREAM THEATER STOOD OUT IN AN ERA AND A GENRE THAT WAS HITTING A CREATIVE WALL. PROGRESSIVE METAL, WITH A RENEWED INTEREST IN ACTUAL SKILLED PLAYING, CREATED AN OUTLET FOR MUSICIANS WITH METAL ON THEIR MIND. ONE SUCH BAND THAT'S STILL RIFFING AFTER ALL THESE YEARS IS TORMAN MAXT.

Regardless of how you'd define the Torman Maxt sound, how would you define the following: "prog rock" and "prog metal" ??**
One of the technical definitions of 'progressive' is "characterized by striving for change or innovation; moving and advancing." For me, what makes something 'progressive' musically is when an artist, either through composition or production, is trying to move towards new ideas and methods. Most importantly, I think 'progressive' should be an adjective and not a noun. Progressive as an adjective makes for artists striving for something new and interesting. Progressive as a noun seems to set up criteria for what the music should be (e.g. long songs, lots of solos, high vocals, etc). It is amazing how many people don't consider us 'progressive' enough because our songs are not 20 minutes long.

The distinction I make between 'rock' and 'metal' is simply instrumentation and timbre. I personally see 'metal' as more distorted electric guitar based with more present and aggressive drumming and 'progressive rock' being much more open sonically, and not dominated by the electric guitar.

****How would you define the Torman Maxt sound?**
That's a tough question. The short answer, for marketing purposes, is 'progressive metal' with some qualifications.

It is progressive in the sense that it strives to advance past what standard rock and metal have done. Compositionally, I have always been motivated by the classical composers. The Baroque period is my favorite, and I have tried to incorporate various forms of counterpoint in the songwriting. I would say that the layering of the guitars and vocals is what gives us our sound. When describing the songs of a band like Dream Theater, I see them visually as very horizontal and linear. There is great instrumentation, but not composed with an emphasis on counterpoint. I have always been fascinated by Bach's *Brandenburg* concertos where there are multiple instruments playing different parts simultaneously; this sounds more horizontal as there are parts 'stacked' on top of one another. I would describe our sound as horizontal. For example, the intro on opening track on our new cd has six different guitar parts happening at the same time.

Because the music is primarily electric guitar based, I think our brand of progressive music leans more towards metal than anywhere else. My favorite bands growing up were Black Sabbath, Iron Maiden, Rush and Judas Priest; I don't think there is anyway to get away from what a person was influenced by.

How does a band of older gentlemen keep the musical thing happening? What are some practical answers to this question (as well as theoretical,

philosophical, etc)?
Wired Magazine ran an article last year that did an analysis of great creators and thinkers, (scientists, musicians, architects, writers etc.) and tried to see if there was any correlation between age and creativity. The result was that age had nothing to do with great work. For example, Einstein came up with the theory of General Relativity at age 26. C.S. Lewis wasn't published until his thirties. *The Screwtape Letters* was published in 1942 when he was 44 years old. I am an architect by profession, and my favorite architect is Frank Lloyd Wright. He was, because of personal scandal, considered washed up by sixty. However, he did his best and most famous work from the ages of 65 until he died at 92. He was still working on the Guggenheim Museum when he died. "Fallingwater," the home in Bear Run, Pennsylvania – the most famous house in the country – was designed by Wright at age 69. I haven't designed my "Fallingwater" yet, either musically or architecturally.

That's a lot of words to say that there is no difficulty keeping the musical thing happening because we love it and it comes from a desire to be artists and not entertainers. It has been my experience that when people get into bands because of the music, they stay involved for the long haul. When people get into it for other reasons they soon fall out. My plan is to keep making Torman Maxt recordings for as long as I am physically able to.

What do you think of the new Rush album? Please dissect it in a few short words or paragraphs.
I have listened to it a handful of times and have read quite a few reviews on it. I am in agreement with most of the reviews that it is a very good album, and the best one they've had in a while. I love the fact that there is lots of guitar work on this one, something I have missed in the past. The acoustic work is fantastic. Also, I appreciate that the vocals are a bit more passionate with some layering and harmonies.

I also love the fact that it is a progression forward in writing and playing despite being in their mid fifties; I am greatly encouraged by Rush, because they seem to be going towards the Frank Lloyd Wright model: getting better with age and not backing down as they move through 'middle age.' I don't know if this album is the one, but I am waiting for one of the great rock bands out there to do their best and most memorable work in their fifties, sixties, or seventies!

As someone who listens and watches what's going on, what are your perceptions of the current "hard music" (metal, punk, alternative, indie rock, screamo, etc) scene?
Going on what I said before, there are some bands that are in it for the music and some for other reasons. The natural angst that follows with this type of music will always be there, so for me the scene, while always changing, is always really the same thing. With the advent of the internet and everyone being able to afford to record their own album, things are not as centralized as they used to be, and there is more to choose from, both good and bad.

Tell us about this new album (recording process, songwriting, sounds, lyrics, themes, stories about its creation, etc)...?
From the first time I heard Rush *2112*, I knew that I wanted to write a concept album like that. I thought *Hemispheres* was great, too. The problem I had was that I never felt like I had a story worth telling. The idea of using the book of Job came to me in 1997. I decided on the title "The Problem of Pain" based upon the C.S. Lewis book, because his book was on the same topic and the title is quite intriguing, especially for a non-religious person.

We had been working on it steadily since 2002, with about nineteen songs, and the end seemed nowhere in sight, when a friend suggested splitting it up into two parts and releasing them in consecutive years, similar to the *Lord of the Rings* movies. That created light at the end of the tunnel. In the past it has been many years between releases for us, so it is exciting to know that we have *The Problem of Pain: Part 2* coming out next year.

Other than the drums, which we did at a conventional studio, the rest of the project was recorded at my architectural studio on my office computer. All of the guitars were recorded using a Line Six Pod, except for some of the acoustics, which were mic'd.

The most interesting part of the writing process (and I hope it will be an encouragement to anyone who wishes they could get back into music, but don't seem to have the time) is that I took nine months to write the lyrics for fifteen songs. As a father of three young children, as well as a small business owner, large blocks of time do not exist in my life, so the only time I had to work on lyrics was in the evenings during my children's bath time. My two daughters were very young at the time and needed fairly close supervision while in the bath. So I decided to write lyrics one verse at a time while supervising their fifteen-minute bath, with the hopes of only getting a line or two done at a time. It was slow, but after nine months they were done. I call it the "*Shawshank Redemption* concept of songwriting." (Anyone who has seen the movie will appreciate that he dug a tunnel with a very small tool).

How can readers of *Heaven's Metal Fanzine* pray for you? Support you? Encourage you?
I would love prayer for a constant reminder to "Seek first the kingdom of God, and all else will follow." It is easy to lose focus being a part of the music industry, making sales, promotion, etc. and miss out on the kingdom of God. I love the way C.S. Lewis phrased it in *Mere Christianity*: "aim at heaven and you get earth thrown in; aim at earth and you get nothing." Also, emails are great. We love to correspond with people. Music is about communication and connection and it's great to get to know people.

How often do you play concerts? Where? How can readers/fans/listeners keep up with ya'll?
With the new album coming out, we are trying to play as many shows as is practical. Nothing concrete yet, except for Cornerstone California and Cornerstone in Illinois. Our website is tormanmaxt.com and they can also check in at our myspace site. We keep current news and information there.

Anything else you'd like to add?
I would just like to thank the people who have hung in with us all of these years and let them know that Torman Maxt will continue to do our best to make thoughtful, interesting, and hopefully inspiring music for years to come.

HEAVEN'S METAL

ETERNAL RYTE
Nehemiah metal resurrected

BY JONATHAN SWANK

In 1990, West Coast melodic metal warriors, Eternal Ryte, birthed from the Hollywood glam scene, unleashed their debut—and only full length album—*World Requiem* on Pure Metal Records. Now, almost 20 years later, Roxx Productions has secured the rights to re-release *World Requiem* along with early demo and live tracks in a two-disc set called *Anthology*. In a complex interview that spanned 3 time zones, I recently caught up with singer Phil St. Vincent via phone and guitar hero Bobby Smith via two internet chats (yours truly lost the first one). Read on to hear more about the *Anthology* project, the 80's Hollywood metal scene and to find out, "What happened to Eternal Ryte?"

To a great extent, *Anthology* was a project essentially born from the desire by fans—expressed through email and internet message boards—to lay their hands on *World Requiem* without having to pay top-dollar, eBay prices (as high as $75). According to founding member/guitarist Bobby Smith, "I was getting emails from people wanting me to send them CDs and/or burn them!" In response to these requests, Bobby contacted Bill Bafford at Roxx—who according to singer Phil St. Vincent, just really seemed to "share a love for the idea"—and compiled all the demo material, plus vintage photos, promo shots and flyers from most of the band's gigs. In addition to a remastered version of *World Requiem*, the 2-disc project will include their 7-song, 1986 unreleased demo, the *Anthem* demo (which got them signed to Pure Metal after their first one was rejected) along with 7 live tracks. Additionally, the first 100 copies of *Anthology* will be autographed by band members and include a live bonus DVD. However, Bobby reassures, "Depending on how it goes, we will probably do more."

Although the project was driven by fan interest, it was apparent to me, in talking with Phil and Bobby, that both are excited to have *World Requiem* see the light of day again, partly because it went out of print so quickly. More importantly, according to Phil, *Anthem* and the live songs from that era (1987—1990) are a better representation of ER's heavier, more raw sound than what finally ended up on their full-length debut. Phil, who thought *Requiem* came off sounding "too slick," had this to say: "I really thought that some of the songs that were put on *Anthem* were more visceral. We had Steve Brown doing the production on it and he was a really, really good producer. He didn't let us lose the energy or the aggressiveness that the band had … I kind of feel like we lost some of that when we did the actual album. I was really influenced by Dio—and you can really hear that on *Anthem*—but on *World Requiem* I couldn't scream or growl, so I really came off sounding more like Don Dokken." Bobby, who conceded that Phil would share a different perspective, had this to say: "The songs were not changed at all. We really got to do what we wanted. Overall, I am happy with the way it came out. Although, if I were to change one thing, it would be to get rid of the second rhythm guitar track and just have one—they had me double all rhythm tracks (for a thicker sound)."

Because Eternal Ryte was a product of the LA Sunset Strip scene, and because they were an accomplished live act "back in the day"—performing at venues like The Roxy and The Whiskey—we spent time reflecting on their origins and their thoughts on 80's metal—both the secular and the Christian scenes, which Phil explained, were not really that segregated in Hollywood.

Bobby, who always strived to be "the best guitar player I could be," and who grew up listening to axe shredders in Van Halen, Iron Maiden, Judas Priest and Ozzy, reminisced: "We played all the clubs in LA and surrounding areas. Every gig would start out the same, with the secular bands just wondering what to expect from some Christian band, and then they were always blown away by our level of musicianship." Apparently, Akira from Loudness (the Japanese metal band that had a huge influence on ER) and Tommy Thayer (then Black N' Blue/now Kiss) expressed respect for the band's talent and style.

Phil, who grew up in Hollywood and spent time on the Sanctuary church staff, commented on the commercial/glam metal movement at the time: "I grew up working at the Troubadour, The Country Club and The Whiskey. I saw the whole scene develop, from the early versions of Ratt and Motley Crue into what became

"I always had fun with the glam scene because it was just about fun...about doing something that was just really outrageous." –Phil St. Vincent

While Phil didn't preach a sermon from the stage, he did share during shows. "I just felt it was deceitful and wrong for me to have people pay 15 bucks to get into a club and then listen to me preach the Gospel. I had this thing for people just going on and on … I have seen bands with a 45 minute set where they would share for 20 minutes and they would never be asked back to the club again. I'd make sure at the end of the show to share the gift of salvation and at the very beginning of the show that we were a Christian band. Before a ballad, I would share a little bit about the love of Christ."

So, with such a great approach and so much talent and credibility, whatever happened to Eternal Ryte? In part, they were a victim of the times—1990 marked the beginning of the end of an era in metal; and in part, as Bobby explains, they were largely underappreciated. "I had been in the band for about 6 years and nothing was coming from the record company—no tour support, nothing! Then, Pure Metal/Refuge was sold to Star Song, and I think I just needed a change and was going in a different direction than Phil. So, I left the band …I got married … and they hired another guitar player, submitted new material and were dropped from the label … and just fell apart from there."

So what have they been up to lately? Bobby, who has been in the guitar industry since 1984 and has worked for Charvel/Jackson, BC Rich and ESP, currently builds guitars for Grosh Guitars, which keeps him close to music. As if that's not enough, he plays in his rockabilly/metal-billy band The Mighty 18 Wheeler on the side. He's inspired by great guitar music, no matter what the style. Phil is singing for the band Spiders & Snakes, which is essentially the band London—the band that, according to Phil, really started the whole glam scene in LA—which, ironically, brings him full circle to where he started.

"We were on a mission to help God—and help kids." –Bobby Smith

the Sunset Strip scene that everyone knows about. I always had fun with the glam scene because it was just about fun—about doing something that was just really outrageous. I know that some people were really just taken back by the androgyny of it … but I saw it more as a show … it was a show more than a lifestyle. Unfortunately, there were people that were way more into the lifestyle than the music. That is probably one of the reasons why the entire Sunset Strip scene just imploded—it became more about look than substance."

Although both Phil and Bobby were heavily influenced by secular metal and the LA metal culture, they did take notice and appreciate what Stryper was doing with metal … and so, as Bobby says, "We decided to join them." While some may feel that Eternal Ryte was comparable to Stryper, Bobby felt ER was only similar to Stryper in that "we were a Christian band in a secular crowd," but that "we were not similar in sound." Phil added, "We really had fun with the 'over-the-top' glam scene, but our music wasn't really ever glam … we had a lot of Yngwie, Dio and Loudness influences."

While Eternal Ryte would certainly be considered evangelical metal by today's standards, it is surprising to hear that they didn't think of themselves that way. In fact, according to Phil, who wrote all the lyrics, he took a lot of flack from evangelicals for "coming off as so critical of the church." "I was just painting a very clear picture of a lot of the community churches in all of our neighborhoods that just do nothing for the community and exist just to keep themselves as a viable entity with an income."

And where do they stand in their faith? While it seems like we hear so many stories about early Christian metal pioneers falling away from the faith, both assured me that that is not the case. Interestingly, neither one of them listens much to new Christian metal, but Phil—who views the current Christian metal scene as much more contemporary, more original—did offer this age-old advice, "Don't get so worried about being competitive that you lose yourself in the image and forget what you are trying to accomplish."

In conclusion, when I asked Bobby if he considered ER to be one of the pioneering Christian metal bands he humbly replied, "I suppose, looking back, it seemed we were at least considered to be, but I was so involved in what we were doing I never took the time to see it. We were on a mission to help God—and help kids." Eternal Ryte was all about action; about reaching out to their broken community of listeners with a message of hope, perfectly conveyed through their own brand of metal—Nehemiah metal.

HEAVENS METAL

Surf this: retroactiverecords.net, soundmass.com, nordicmission.net, jimmyhotz.com, whirlwind-records.com, napalmrecords.com, rivelrecords.com

ALBUM REVIEWS

DELIVERANCE

ASSIMILATION, GREETINGS OF DEATH & THE FIRST FOUR YEARS [re-releases]

Not only has Deliverance released their first new album in over five years, but Retroactive Records has also re-released three of their past albums, spanning three decades of music. *Assimilation* has been digitally remastered and includes a second CD of demos from the album. The sound quality of the demos is good, though most of the songs are without lyrics. *Greetings of Death* contains demo versions of some of Deliverance's greatest songs, including "No Time" and "Weapons of our Warfare." The album has been digitally remastered, though the songs are still unmistakably in demo form, adding to their charm. *The First Four Years* was originally released on CD in 2000, but had become difficult to find. The production is poor, so this is truly a release for the fans. Hearing Jimmy Brown's commentary throughout the album, however, makes it an interesting listen. [Retroactive] Chris Beck

MORTIFICATION

LIVE HUMANITARIAN

If any Christian metal band deserves a lifetime achievement award, it's Mortification. Their existence is going on 20 years. Their musical and lyrical stance hasn't wavered and their founding member is a cancer survivor. While this is not an achievement award, the band has released yet another live release—their fifth live album to date. While they haven't wavered on their commitment to metal, they have changed stylistically over the years, always keeping it close to old school thrash … and this release finds a veteran band cranking out thrash tunes with intensity. Mick Jelinic's guitar really stands out, especially on songs like "Hammer of God" (where his soloing reminds me of The Lead's dual-guitar attack on *Burn this Record*), as well as "Purest Intent." The overall mix and sound quality are surprisingly good, considering most Christian death metal bands are operating on a shoestring budget. My only complaint is the vocals, which are a bit weak in comparison to the studio records. I'm sure the live show takes a toll on one's vocal chords though, so I'm not complaining too much. A nice highlight of the disc is the spoken word sections. In one of these, Steve Rowe goes into detail describing his battle with leukemia in a concise manner, giving fans and attendees an inside view of his journey battling this deadly disease. He turns the story into a testimony of God's care and provision, as well as Steve's own absence of the fear of death, due to his faith. Also, his defense of the Church in Spoken Word (Part 4) was particularly insightful. [Rowe] Loyd Harp

FROSTHARDR

VARG

The second official release from Frosthardr is another EP. *Varg* is a brilliant collection of songs, and a collection is really what this is, you see, as all three of the songs on this were recorded at different times over the years. You can notice a difference in the production from song to song, but even though they all sound different, they all are recorded quite nicely. Musically, the songs are great, with grim and cold intensity and strong songwriting—even the One Bad Pig cover shines. Only 850 of these gems are being released to the public, so get yours today.

[Momentum Scandinavia] Michael Larson

JIMMY HOTZ

BEYOND THE CRYSTAL SEA

Reviewing this album re-issue is almost unfair, because it has logged probably hundreds of hours on my stereo for the past two decades. Jimmy Hotz, who produced the legendary art-rock masterpiece album *Warrior* by Arkangel, did his own genius prog rock work here back in 1980 on the small indie label Vision Records. The sound is quite original, but for a reference: Imagine Jon Anderson collaborating with King Crimson and Pink Floyd. Bold, sweeping soundscapes and sweet melodic vocals take the listener on a tale of fantasy and biblical truth. After all these years, the sounds only age slightly. I'd say this is pretty much a mandatory pickup if artful, melodic and prog hard rock interest you in the least! [Independent] DVP

PANTOKRATOR

AURUM

Following up their under-appreciated album, *Blod*, Pantokrator had positioned themselves to become one of today's leading Christian death metal bands. Arguably, they have accomplished this with *Aurum*, but the album fails to fully live up to expectations. With *Aurum*, Pantokrator fully embraces the Gothenburg Metal sound that bands such as Children of Bodom continue to popularize. Ultimately, this may be the album's shortfall. Melodic, driving rhythms are prevalent throughout and the songs certainly aren't bad, but the formula was perhaps followed a bit too closely; there simply isn't much that is memorable or original about the music. Still, this is a solid effort that demonstrates the band's continued growth. [Whirlwind] Chris Beck

MEHIDA

BLOOD & WATER

From Finland, where the water is obviously tainted with raw musical talent, comes Mehida. With a line-up that includes members that have played with such bands as Divinefire, Candlemass, Kotipelto, Sonata Artica and Therion, I knew this had to be good. I was right! With super tight guitars, pounding drums and rhythm section, melodic vocals, and a very tasteful keyboardist, this makes for one of the finest melodic prog metal releases this year. They seek to focus on "emphasizing the musical extreme—from complex rhythmic sequences to unexpected modern melody lines—while always managing to remain accessible, catchy, and easy to listen to." Mission accomplished!

[Napalm Records] Jeff McCormack

HEEL

EVIL DAYS

This new band/project from Sweden, with former members of Insania (Stockholm) and Ramm, could become a welcome addition to any Dio/Yngwie/Rainbow fan's collection of traditional keyboard-accented melodic metal.

Surf this: tormanmaxt.com, michaeldrive.com, ulterium-records.com

David Henriksson has a strong, clear voice; he strains a bit, however, at the top of his range and the vocal phrasings and accents, at times, betray his Swedish tongue. The guitar shredding of Marcus Elisson is very good, as is the band that backs him up. While this isn't the "Jesus rock" of Leviticus, the lyrics are generally positive—some alluding to life after death ("Paradise") and the meaning of our existence ("Northern Lights"). Yeah, this is a bit cliché at times, like the Stryper sound-alike ballad "Always" and the laugh-at-ourselves "we are metal gods" song "Heel," but overall, fans of Majestic Vanguard and Narnia should really enjoy this. [Rivel Records] Jonathan Swank

PANTOKRATOR

A DECADE OF THOUGHTS

A collection of works from 1996 - 2006, this pretty much covers the history of Pantokrator, featuring some unreleased songs and even a Vengeance Rising cover. As it always is with collection discs like this one, the production quality varies from song to song. But honestly, this disc has some decent production throughout. A must have for the true fan. Strictly limited to a release of 850 copies on this one folks, so basically you snooze, you lose. [Momentum Scandinavia] Michael Larson

TORMAN MAXT

THE PROBLEM OF PAIN, PT 1

This CD is, according to their site, "a 'rock opera' and was inspired by the Rush album *2112*…" This is the band's third release, and they give us another great prog-rock release, reminiscent in many ways to the 70s prog sound, but with a more modern edge to it. I do hear signs of an early era Rush in the sound, mixed in with pieces of other great prog rockers like the Flower Kings, King Crimson, Yes and the like… good stuff indeed. Production is sonically clear with a clean mix allowing all instruments to shine through. This CD is part one of the story of Job and his sufferings, with part two set for an early 2008 release, dealing with Job and his friends. [Independent] Jeff McCormack

ORATORIO

REDEMPTION

Guitars … ah, walls of glorious guitars. This Finnish metal band—originally formed in 1999—has matured well. Not only does their second full-length release sound more powerful, more diverse and more cohesive, but their traditional metal/power metal root sound has been injected with just the right dose of modern metal. In addition to the heavy guitar rhythms and tasteful solos, Joel Hekkala's melodic Geoff Tate/Ray Parra voice—with its slightly pouting and monotone, Viking-like quality—is both mesmerizing and euphoric. The "oratorio" here is all about dealing with personal struggles and sin through deep spiritual conviction and faith in the "redemptive" God. Along with Miseration, this is the hardest hitting, most aggressive metal out of the Rivel camp so far this year. [Rivel Records] Jonathan Swank

MICHAEL DRIVE

ONE DIRECTION LEFT ... FROM HELL

Powerhouse vocalist from Barren Cross, Mike Lee, now known by Michael D.R.I.V.E., is back in the USA and with a new CD on top of that. This is not metal, but is a diverse variety of styles from an upbeat rock to emotionally charged acoustic rock pieces, with one techno dance track thrown in to round it out. Contained herein is six studio tracks intertwined with six live tracks from Paris with his band Fastdrive (also available on DVD), with great production quality and clarity throughout. Check his site for many musical samples and video clips. [Independent] Jeff McCormack

MERCURY FANG

IGNITION

The sophomore release from this unusual hard rock/sometimes metal / modern rock band continues in the same vein as their debut, *Liquid Sunshine*, with a fresh and diverse collection of songs. These guys are really hard to put in one genre niche, because their mix includes elements of pop rock, modern rock, classic rock/metal—the organ/keys even add elements of prog. This is the sort of band you might hear in a nightclub or bar playing cover tunes by all of your favorite artists—playing extremely well. Fortunately, these guys create their own music, which is an amalgam of different styles and familiar sounds combined in a very comforting way. The singer has a mature, clear voice that, oddly enough, sounds like a combination of Eric Clapton and Paul Stanley. If you love everything about classic rock except its dated sound, then check out this talented band. [Rivel Records] Jonathan Swank

DARKWATER

CALLING THE EARTH TO WITNESS

In the wake of the epic symphonic 7days release, Markus Sigfridsson (along with three other mates from Harmony) continues to navigate the seas of high-minded metal. Perhaps his best release to date, this disc is chock-full of heavy, yet dynamic melodic/progressive metal tunes—all anchored by a killer, pristine production sound. Think *Awake* era Dream Theater crunch with infusions of neoclassical Symphony X and those emotive Evergrey keys. While the chops (all the way around) are top-notch, it is the songwriting—the ebb and flow of intensity and melody—that really makes this music so tantalizingly infectious. In a world of repetitively dehydrating dark metal, this is an incredibly refreshing gulp of melodic/progressive water. [Ulterium Records] Jonathan Swank

EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

OVERWORLD

Here's some medium-heavy, medium-tempo modern/progressive rock of the song-driven variety. Don't think of the Neal Morse/Kerry Livgren "use every instrument and time meter in the book" variety; think of the Detroit progressive band Tiles "we incorporate modern elements into the grooves" variety. And while EWS may not be quite as technically inclined as the aforementioned act, I can't help but hear vocal similarities to Tiles' Paul Rarick. In a strange way, this almost reminds me of an old Texas band called 20/20 Blind; they don't blow you away with chops, but the melodies catch your ear. While this is undoubtedly uplifting and mellow small-venue rock, it most certainly will be a bit too laid back for most hard rockers and metalheads. [Soundmass] Jonathan Swank

Surf this: illuminandi.kdm.pl, nordicmission.net, thisfiresembrace.com, promiselandx.com

ILLUMINANDI

ILLUMINA TENEBRAS MEAS

Symphonic gothic death metal? Hailing from Poland, they are a mix of dark, heavy music, over-laid with violin and cello, mixed with both death metal growls and melodic male and female vocals. Interestingly enough, it works! Elements of this remind me of the symphonic material of Believer with a mix of Virgin Black here and there. This five song EP has nine songs total; five songs with vocals in English and four of them in Polish. [Independent] Jeff McCormack

ADMONISH

INSNARJD

Beautiful and blistering, *Insnärjd* is a riveting piece of black metal. Every aspect of this release shines from the songwriting to the production to the sleeve layout. I found myself afloat amidst both the beauty and chaos for 26 minutes at a time, dreaming of a place far away from this drab existence that happens to overcome me as I go about my daily routine. Why this amazing EP is limited to strictly 850 copies is beyond me. Someone made a bad decision there; this will be fetching a huge price on the net just a short time down the road, so get yours today. Do not delay!

[Momentum Scandinavia] Michael Larson

THIS FIRES EMBRACE

REDEMPTION

While the story behind the conversion of this band's singer is interesting (see their site), the music is even more so. Amazingly clear production and excellent musicianship give these seven songs of pumped up metal that much more power to stand out. While most songs maintain a vocal clarity that puts them in a power metal category, there are enough aggressive growls and screams mixed in to put this release on the border of a slightly more extreme category. [Roadmap] Jeff McCormack

PROMISE LAND

DEMO

Surprising sound from this four-piece indie metal band from Pittsburgh. The band fuses older-styled power metal with nu metal riffs and rhythms and tops it off with some string sections for fun. It's hard to tell whether the strings are real or synthesized, but my guess is that they're done with the keyboards. It still sounds pretty decent, the way they're used because they don't rely on them too heavily, even though they are an integral part of Promise Land's sound. Vocally, they remind me of Prong, Eloi or Eternal Decision, and even musically they have some of those groove metal vibes going on. All in all, a decent release from an up and coming band. Check them out if you enjoy the above mentioned bands or others like Rammstein and late-period Metallica. [Independent] Loyd Harp

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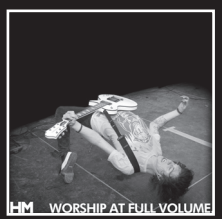

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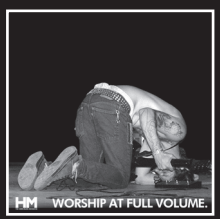

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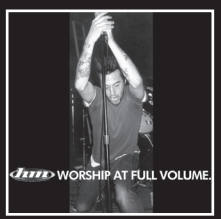

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MINISTRY & METAL : LIFESTYLES

A VIEWPOINT FROM LOYD HARP

There has recently been an immense amount of discussion—disagreement even—about just how Christian metal bands should go about doing ministry and metal. How does one go about being both ministry-oriented and artistically viable? How does one faithfully answer the call to share the Gospel with the masses, yet do it in a way that is culturally relevant and contextually sensitive?

While there are as many answers to these questions as there are Christian metal bands, there seem to be two basic competing views of how ministry and metal should go together. The first camp cries out for bands to be bold and passionate regarding their faith, advocating preaching from stage, Scripture-filled evangelistic lyrics, and perhaps even altar calls for salvation at metal concerts. It's possible to draw the conclusion that some in this camp believe Christian metal that doesn't boldly preach salvation can doubtfully be called Christian metal at all. Although Steve Rowe (bassist/vocalist/founder of Mortification) hasn't claimed this in his "Throwing Down the Gauntlet" column, he has a clear longing for the glory days of Christian metal when more bands took this blatant evangelistic approach.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, there are those who advocate a more relational approach to evangelism. They believe that preaching from the stage, along with other more traditional evangelism tactics, does more harm than good. They believe that what non-Christian metalheads need is for their believing friends to show them the love of Christ in tangible ways, often by simply befriending them or sharing basic Christian principles with them. Raffi of Fear Dark Records worries that an "in-your-face" approach to Christian metal will not attract people to Christ; it will, instead, turn them away.

I'd like to introduce a third element into the discussion. I don't believe the defining factor of metal ministry can be boiled down to whether or not we preach from the stage. Instead, the essence of being a metal missionary is defined by the lifestyle of the person(s) involved—including what is done both on and off the stage. The most important thing in any believer's life is his or her relationship with God. Well, that's what we say we believe anyway. And yet, we don't seem to approach our music in this way. What's most important when creating music—for both sides of the debate—should be to love God through our art.

What troubles me about the "to preach or not to preach" debate is that it seems to leave the lifestyle of the believer completely out of the equation. For instance, if the person preaching from stage is living a life contrary to the message preached, is he or she still a proponent of Christian metal? What about those who don't want the label "Christian band?" We hear all the time, "We're not a Christian band, but Christians in a band." On the one hand, I sincerely understand the need to be un-labeled and received by an unbiased listening audience. But let's be honest … isn't this concern sometimes just a cop-out because we don't want to be associated with Christians … or worse, with Christ? If we want to go into the darkness, we have to indeed be light.

What's the answer? Truth is, it's way too easy to sit back and count how many times a band quotes Scripture or mentions Jesus in the lyrics (the "Jesus count"). It's equally easy to decide to preach and give an altar call at every concert. It is much more difficult, however, to be so in touch with God in our lives that we no longer judge our brothers and sisters for approaching ministry in a different way than we would. What's more important than the method we choose, is to be led by the Spirit of God for when to preach or how to preach—with or without words. I enjoyed the recent interview with Rowan London of Virgin Black (*Heaven's Metal #69*). When the writer asked, "What'd you like people to say about Virgin Black?" Rowan responded, "…the results are secondary to the commitment to a life lived right." Isn't this what God wants from us … to be obedient and faithful to the call He has placed on us?

If we preach and take the blatant evangelistic approach, it's very clear that God will use that to reach people. If you have that kind of gift, you should use it to the best of your ability, while making sure that your life with God backs up what you're saying. If you take the non-preaching, relational approach to evangelism, you, too, have to be able to back up what you are saying. Are you taking a less-confrontational approach because you don't want to be accountable for witnessing or because you truly believe it is the most effective way for you to share the Gospel? If it's the former, there's a real danger there. But if it's the latter, you have an awesome opportunity and responsibility to live out the Gospel among those who perhaps need it most.

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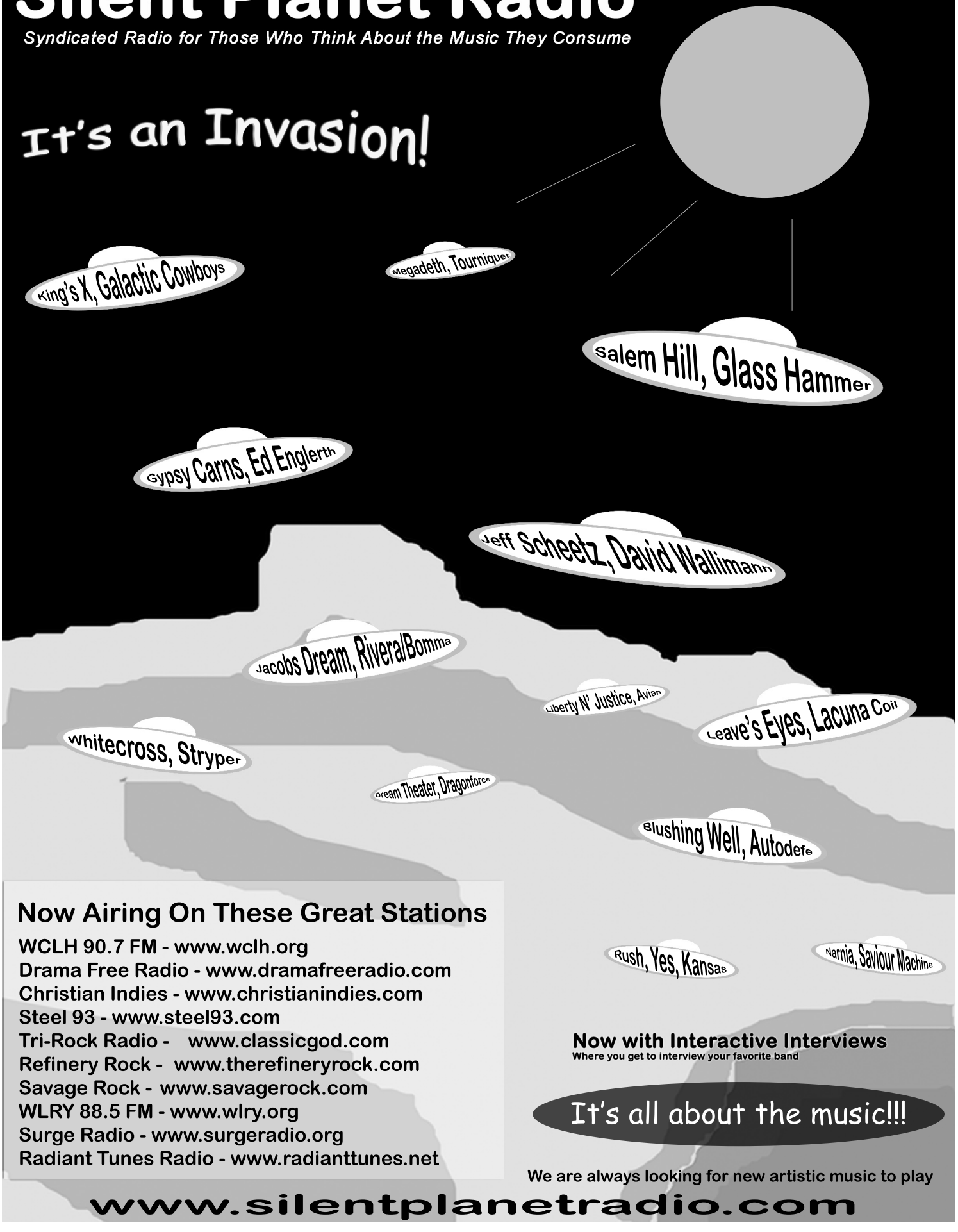

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THROWING DOWN THE GAUNTLET

By Steve Rowe

FINDING YOUR OWN WAY

I was shocked recently when I received an email "supposedly" from a famous young Christian metal band slamming me for going to Europe to "preach from stage" and "ruin all the strong work they had done?" I was not sharp enough to realize that the mail was bogus until I tried to return my "calm-but-to-the-point" response and could not. I went to the band's website and forwarded the bogus mail with my response, apologizing that I had assumed that the mail was legitimate. As it turned out, the band knew nothing of the mail and was as shocked as I was that someone would pose as a major band—all in the name of pushing their opinion. Just for the record, I only ever communicate about my Christian faith from stage at an appropriate Christian event.

I get quite a bit of this type of email and it floors me the respect that comes our way from the mainstream fans and the negative mail that comes from Christians. Of course, I also get a lot of very positive mail from Christians … for this I am very grateful. I have not received hate mail from any non-Christians since 1995. I realize that some Satanists hate me, but no threats or angry letters for years.

John Lennon was killed by a fan who believed that if he killed Lennon he would become Lennon himself? Such is the insanity of some fans obsession with music artists. I have true Mortification fans that have set up great support sites like mortification.de, but also some misguided fans starting Mortification Myspace pages without asking me first. I gave this my ok, but was disappointed that we did not have the chance to grab the Mortification name for a Myspace page. Some of these pages offer our video clips for free. This of course kills our DVD sales.

So here is my point: we all need to find our own way in life. I love the Swedish band Narnia, but would never start a Narnia Myspace and place their video clips for free. That would be so misguided. So what shall we make of the dilemma between negative mail from Christians and crazy fans who pose on my behalf? Firstly, find your own identity in Christ. Then, He will guide you on your own path and give you wisdom when mailing Christian artists in either a negative or positive way. I can handle constructive criticism. If you need another Christian person's identity on which to vent your anger or find your identity, a strong reality check needs to be done on your self esteem.

PASTOR BOB'S INTERNATIONAL REPORT

By Pastor Bob

I just returned from Europe where I spoke at "Rock On The Rock Festival" in Italy and attended "The Last Stand Festival" in Denmark. Both were great events. Besides the heat (it was an outdoor festival with temps staying around 110 degrees), the festival was a delight. Two bands in particular stuck out: Reform The Resistance from Nashville and Triplet from Portugal. I have featured both of them in a three-part series that I am doing on my Podcast. I continue to be impressed with the metal fans in Denmark. They are more than enthusiastic. God is really doing some exciting things there. Once again, I have asked three friends to share some exciting things that are happening around the world…

[*sanctuaryinternational.com*]

Japan, Finland, England, & metal

Gordy Carlson, Eero Solje & Michael

Gordy Carlson – Osaka, Japan

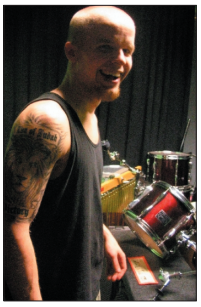
What does a Christian band man who loves to rock do in Japan? The best advice is to get out of Dodge! There are too many temptations out there! If you have a steady walk with Christ and a strong marriage, however, there might be a few ways to do it … but watch out!

Finding a Christian band probably won't happen ... so you hook up with some good musicians and play covers, originals, WHATEVER in bars and "live houses." No one listens to the content of your music. You could be singing "June, June, July" over and over and people will care less. Just go out there and play your best. Build a reputation. Live a clean life. Then, the opportunities come to play all over the country … not only playing opportunities, but chances to touch other lives for Christ!

The chances to be a testimony in bars are few, but those few are worth it! Imagine running into a back-sliding Christian who just happens to KNOW that you're a Christian ... you know ... you just smell like it! You end up going out with them ... having them into your Christian home ... and who knows what? God works in mysterious ways!

I wouldn't recommend this life to anyone ... but for me it is where God has planted me. Pray that I become a better vessel in the days and years to come.
[flashrox@hotmail.com]

Eero Solje – Helsinki, Finland



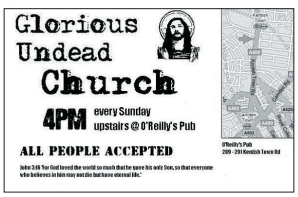
Our Christian metal scene here in Finland is more than music. It has been my pleasure to see and get to know more and more young metalheads to come in this family. Almost all the bands know each other and have played with each other ... so our scene is quite small but increasing. Finnish Christian metal people love moshpits and moshing. There are a few great Christian metal happenings in Finland every year. We have Immortal MetalFest in the Spring and OHM-fest in the Summer. Now we have metal mass (but Priests are not growling the Word of God). We have also a great Christian music dealer: maanalainenlevykauppa.com. They have been doing a great job bringing us metal records from around the world.

Here are some Finnish Christian metal bands that that you should check out: Deuteronomium – legendary death`n roll band that has made a comeback after many years; Immortal Souls – legendary band and they are still going on; Renascent – brutal melodic death metal; Mehida – a new melodic metal band that is beyond great; Megiddon – melodic death metal band, they are just making their first full length album; Oratorio – melodic heavy rock.

I myself play in Sotahuuto. We have been making our new album and it will be out August. In the Christian Hardcore scene there is only one band—my band Pain Remains. That is sad. I hope there are more in future.
[myspace.com/painremains]

Michael – Glorious Undead Church, London, England

"Glorious Undead" started 7 years ago, initially as part of Asylum Church. It's always been around 15-25 people, the majority having "alternative taste." We meet Sundays 4pm in a room above a smokey and noisy pub. Services are fairly relaxed, consisting of worship, preaching, communion and prayer and we try to make things as involved as possible. We always finish the night off together with some food. Recently we've been looking again at the point of the church and so far God is telling us that GU should be a place where each individual should be encouraged and supported in the things God has put on their hearts. If all are supported, God can reach many people through us. We are still on this journey, but we trust God to lead us as His body. Come visit if you come to London!
[john_tarantula@hotmail.com]



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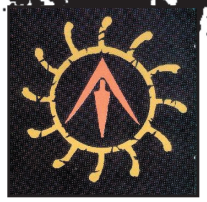

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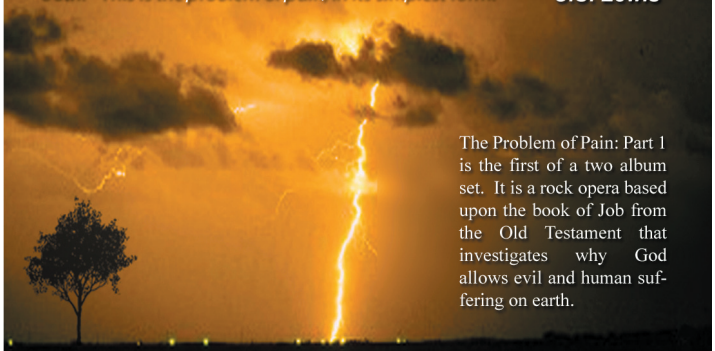
torman maxt

The Problem of Pain: Part 1

"If God were good, he would wish to make His creatures perfectly happy, and if God were almighty, He would be able to do what He wished. But the creatures are not happy. Therefore, God lacks either goodness, or power, or both." This is the problem of pain, in its simplest form. **C.S. Lewis**



The Problem of Pain: Part 1 is the first of a two album set. It is a rock opera based upon the book of Job from the Old Testament that investigates why God allows evil and human suffering on earth.

The Band: Torman Maxt

The Album: The Problem of Pain: Part 1

The Sound: Black Sabbath, Rush, Dream Theater, King's X, System of a Down, Janes Addiction.....*lots of electric guitars, lots of acoustic guitars and everything else in between...*

"This is that incredible band you knew existed, but have yet to discover...not since Rush 2112 has there been a concept album of this caliber... -TheProgFiles.com

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ROXX RECORDS

"THE WAIT IS OVER!!!"

The wait is over… Coming this September, Roxx Records has secured the rights to release the long out of print **Eternal Ryte** release ***World Requiem***. The band's debut CD has been a much sought after collectible with collectors paying top dollar for the original release on sites like eBay. Now available for a limited time and in a limited quantity this 2 disc set will feature everything you could imagine from this 80's glam band's history.

The 2 disc set will include the entire ***World Requiem*** release as well as 2 earlier recorded demo tapes. The 6 track ***Anthem*** demo was sold by the band and at shows prior to the release of ***World Requiem***. Also the never before released ***Untitled*** demo, which includes 7 additional never before released songs. If that's not enough you will also get some exclusive LIVE performances captured in the band's heyday.

This deluxe package will be completely remastered, repackaged and released in a limited edition quantity of only 1000. The first 100 copies sold will be autographed by all 4 original members. If that's not enough for you the first 100 copies on the pre-sale will also come with an exclusive DVD of some of the band's best live performances ever captured on camera. This DVD will NOT be available after the pre-sale is complete, so get yours early!! This release is sure to become a collector's item, so get yours now while you can!

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